

authority should be Rs. 1,000 and the Dewan should be invested with the power of granting loans up to Rs. 10,000. As for the dilatoriness and delay of the Tahsildars in disposing of loan applications, they were irremediable so long as the Tahsildars had the power. The most useful course would be, the Member said, to invest the Director of Agriculture with powers to grant loans. If necessary, the Government might depute a competent Revenue Officer of the grade of a Deputy Tahsildar to help the Director in disposing of loan applications.

The next want of the Travancore ryot was *water*. Travancore with vast areas available for cultivation was importing every year paddy and rice to the value of Rs. 1,30,00,000. Among the wants which stood in the way of enlarging the area under paddy, water occupied a prominent place. Trivandrum taluk abounded in irrigation tanks, most of which had gone into disrepair and were in a deplorable and useless condition. If those tanks were put in thorough order by the Government, they would be of incalculable help to the agricultural population. He quoted also the opinion of the Director of Agriculture to the same effect and suggested the formation of Taluk and Village Boards for undertaking the work described above, such Boards being composed of the Tahsildar, the local Agricultural and P. W. D. Officers, and 3 non-official nominated and 3 non-official elected Members. The amount required by the Board might be found partly from the provision under "Irrigation" in the D. P. W. Budget and partly from the people by the levy of a cess. In conclusion, the Member added that education, sanitation and many other important works could be efficiently controlled and carried on by the Taluk Boards.

*Dewan's reply.*—Noted.

**51. Difficulties experienced by the ryots of South Travancore in the matter of agricultural facilities.**

*Mr. N. Sankaranarayana Pillai* (Member, Vilavancode taluk) said that 98 per cent of the people of the taluk depended entirely on agriculture, and that the Kuzhithurai river which ran through the taluk did not help the people in the matter of cultivation, as the level of the river was much below the level of the lands. On the other hand, the high floods in the river proved injurious to cultivation in the rainy season. There were about 750 *puravu* tanks and certain canals in the taluk and the people depended on them for the supply of water for cultivation.

The first point, therefore, to which the Member invited the attention of the Government was the unsatisfactory condition of the tanks in the taluk. The maintenance and repair of such tanks was being attended to by the Government from a very long time and a portion of the expenditure was being realised from the ryots. In 1957, the then Dewan, Mr. Ramaiengar, C. S. I., ordered that provision should be made in the P. W. D. Budget for cutting a new channel from Kodayar at Thripparappu for irrigating parts of the Vilavancode taluk. But nothing was done in the matter. In pursuance of the policy of the Government formulated in 1962 for improving irrigation throughout the State, a sum of Rs. 5,000 was sanctioned in that year for irrigation works in the Vilavancode taluk and the work was ordered to be executed through the Dewan Peishkar of Padmanabhapuram. A few tanks were improved with the above funds.

It was at that juncture that the works connected with the Pechippara Dam were taken in hand. There was a proposal at the time to cut the Right Bank Channel for the benefit of the ryots of the Vilavancode taluk. The taluk was not benefited by the general policy of 1962 and nothing further was done in respect of irrigation works. The Pechippara Dam was completed and water was diverted through the Left Bank Channel. The works started in connection with the Right Bank Channel were stopped and the reason urged was that the Government wanted to see whether the water in the Reservoir would be sufficient to justify the opening of the proposed Right Bank Channel. The Pechippara Dam was, therefore, of no use to the people of the taluk. The urgent necessity of restoring the tanks in the taluk to afford facilities for cultivation had been repeatedly brought before Government by the Members of the taluk at the fourth, sixth, seventh, eighth, tenth and twelfth sessions of the Assembly. It was stated in reply that the Chief Engineer had completed the investigation of the question but that his

report had not been submitted to Government. It was not clear why such a long time was required for the submission of the Chief Engineer's report.

The opening of the Right Bank Channel, long hoped for by the people, had also become a doubtful matter. The Member said that the water flowing in the dry season from the Mannanpara dam would suffice for cultivating 4,000 acres of wet lands, that a channel 25 miles in length might be opened from the above dam, that that channel would help the cultivation of the wet lands in the Kaliyil, Arumana, Edakode, Pakode and Vilavancode *pakuthis* and that the work would not cost more than two lakhs of rupees. The Government had also spent some money in marking the line for the above channel. If the work had been completed, the people would have been ready to repay a portion of the expenditure in the shape of water cess. In respect of the *pakuthis* other than those mentioned above, the Member submitted that the tanks in those *pakuthis* should be improved and made serviceable by spending a sum of Rs. 50,000 over them. A portion of that sum could be recouped from the ryots. Some of the tanks ceased to exist on account of the encroachments made on them by the adjacent registry-holders. Others had become silted up. Though the Government had sanctioned Rs. 10,000 in 1090 and Rs. 8,000 in 1091 for improving the irrigation tanks in the taluk, the expenditure was not actually incurred. In view of the difficulties mentioned above, the Member prayed that orders might be issued for the opening of the channel mentioned by him and for improving the irrigation tanks in the taluk.

The second complaint of the Member related to the grievances of the people on account of the unsatisfactory maintenance of the river, canals and tanks in the taluk which were Government *porambokes*. In the rainy season, the water in the river and canals overflowed their banks and found their way to adjacent wet lands and destroyed the cultivation. There were instances in which many wet lands had been silted up rendering cultivation impossible for some time. The petitions presented to the authorities praying for the restoration of such lands were not favourably considered. Neither the P. W. Department nor the Revenue Department took any action in the matter. As the evils mentioned above worked real hardship to the ryots, the Member suggested that a responsible Officer of Government might be deputed to inspect the lands concerned and devise measures with a view to redress the grievances of the people and that the works that might be suggested by him be undertaken without delay. He also requested that stringent orders might be issued to the authorities concerned to maintain the *porambokes* free of encroachments.

The Member then pointed out that, according to the rules issued under the Irrigation Regulation, all the major works had to be undertaken by the P. W. Department and that the minor and petty works should be carried out by the Revenue Department. Section 4 of the rules laid down that a list of all minor irrigation works constructed or completely restored or repaired should be published in the Gazette in the first month of every official year. But such works did not seem to have been carried out nor had any list been published in the Gazette. That showed that neither the Regulation nor the rules had been brought into operation or that there were considerable difficulties to be overcome before they could be introduced. The Member knew that, in 1912, the Chief Engineer wrote to Government requesting all the minor irrigation works in the Padmanabhapuram Division being entrusted to his department and that the views of the Peishkars were invited on the point. But nothing further was known. All the irrigation works in the Padmanabhapuram Division, excepting those relating to the Vilavancode taluk were in charge of the P. W. Department. The Member prayed that the irrigation works in the Vilavancode taluk also might be entrusted to the P. W. Department, instead of the Revenue Department, as already suggested by the Chief Engineer and that the necessary corrections be made in the rules.

The Member also requested that the execution of such irrigation works connected with agriculture might be entrusted to respectable agriculturists in each locality who would be able to carry them out more economically.

Lastly, the Member complained that the officers of the Agricultural Department did not frequently visit the interior parts of the country. He, therefore, requested that they might be directed to visit the several *pakuthis* and advise the ryots on improved methods of cultivation. He also prayed for the village roads in the taluk being improved.

*Deewan's reply.*—Noted.

## 52. Agricultural needs of the Neyyattinkara taluk.

*Mr. S. V. E. A. Manikkam Chettiyar* (Member, Neyyattinkara taluk) prefaced his remarks by observing that the prosperity of a country depended on the degree of agricultural improvement to which it had attained. The population of Neyyattinkara was 1,78,703, the chief occupation of the people being agriculture. There were no facilities for trade or industries. Formerly, the taluk was a rich one from a mercantile point of view because of the importance of Puvar and Vizhinjam which trading vessels used to touch. But now the only industry of the taluk was agriculture. According to his estimate, there were 641 *elas* in the taluk, suitable for cultivation with an area of about 1,19,005 acres. Of that area, *punja* lands covered 14,819 acres, garden lands 91,079 acres, *tharisu* 8,377 acres, and *poram bokes* 4,729 acres. The total revenue from the taluk was Rs. 1,12,468. The Member pointed out that there were about 1,200 tanks in the taluk which were all rain-fed. But they had become silted up and useless. If they had been repaired and put in order, they could be used to store rain water and would then irrigate the lands which at present were lying fallow. The cultivation of the *tharisu* area meant an annual increase of Rs. 12,000 to the revenue, besides addition to the country's production. It was entirely owing to want of water that the *tharisu* lands could not be cultivated. He did not ask for the tanks being taken in hand all at once. The more important of the tanks in each *ela* might be taken up first and then the smaller ones. The ryots were prepared to raise from among themselves half the cost of the expenditure required, the other half being met from State funds, as he was sure that the expenditure by Government would be more than covered by the additional revenue in the shape of assessment. But if the Government so desired, the people would be prepared to meet the whole cost. He made that statement, because he was authorised by his constituents to place that matter before Government. There was, the Member continued, a large area of *punja* lands in the taluk; yet, the output of paddy was not sufficient and a large quantity was being imported. The importation of the country's staple food grains was considerably hampered by the absence of shipping facilities in the State. If, as suggested by the Member, the *tharisu* lands could be brought under the plough, the people on his side would not have to depend on outside paddy. In Kottukal, there was an *ela* with 5,000 and odd *paras* of land. On account of the present silted condition of the tanks, 3,000 and odd *paras* were not being cultivated and there were several breaches in the various big tanks which had not been attended to for years. In conclusion, the Member prayed that the works referred to by him might be carried out by Government.

*Deewan's reply.*—Noted.

## 53. Need for State aid in respect of Agriculture in the Chirayinkil taluk.

*Mr. G. Velayudha Kurup* (Member, Chirayinkil taluk) said that more than 85 per cent of the people of the taluk depended entirely upon agriculture for their livelihood and that there were not sufficient facilities for cultivation in the taluk at present. There were more than 20,000 acres of wet lands which were cultivated twice in the year. The assessment fixed on the lands in the taluk was also high when compared with the rates obtaining in the neighbouring taluks. The result was that, with the failure of crops which occurred frequently, the taluk was getting impoverished. In former days the Government had afforded facilities for cultivation in the taluk. Each *ela* was provided with a tank known as 'Cherakulam.' There